

the terrorists, enabling the squad to return to base safely.

This February, now-Staff Sergeant Wilczek and now-Specialists Alvarez and Pushkin were awarded the Silver Star, the third-highest award given for valor in the face of the enemy. Sergeant Row was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor.

Their acts of heroism rank them among the finest America has to offer. But what I find most amazing is that they are everyday people who could be your neighbor, coworker or relative. And we have thousands more brave Americans in uniform all willing to do the same.

So this Memorial Day, remember the courage of our servicemen and women, performing extraordinary feats just like the men of Fort Campbell. Remember the sacrifice of those who don't make it back home. As long as America has fighters of such spirit, we can never be defeated on the battlefield.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, we are approaching Memorial Day, a time to honor those servicemembers who gave their very lives—what Abraham Lincoln described as “the last full measure of devotion.” When Lincoln spoke those words, he was dedicating a modest “soldiers cemetery” in a Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg. Today Gettysburg and the address Lincoln gave there hold a special place in our national memory. In fewer than 300 words, President Lincoln delivered one of the most famous speeches in the history of this great Republic.

In that speech, Lincoln said what was known: that it is good and right to dedicate a place to honor the brave servicemembers who rest beneath it. But more importantly, he put into words what was felt: that the best way to honor the dead is to remember their sacrifices, and dedicate our lives to the Nation for which they gave their lives.

What we now call Memorial Day was begun in the aftermath of that war, with two dozen cities and towns across the United States laying claim to being the birthplace of what was then called Decoration Day. Generations later, America paused in the aftermath of World War I, a massive conflict that inspired the poem, “In Flanders Field,” about the lives the war took and the bond between the living and the dead. That poem roused the convictions of an American teacher named Moina Michael, who clung to the image of the red poppies in Flanders Field, which grew above the graves of World War I servicemembers. Miss Michael vowed to “keep the faith” with those who had died and to wear a red poppy as a sign of that pledge. She recorded her commitment in a poem she called “We Shall Keep the Faith,” which reads, in part:

We Cherish, too, the poppy red,
That grows on fields where valor led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies

Miss Michael spent the rest of her life raising money for veterans and sur-

vivors in need, by selling red poppies to honor the men and women who gave their lives in the service of our Nation. Through the sale of poppies made by disabled veterans, she raised approximately 200 million dollars for veterans and their survivors.

Today our great Nation steps further into the fifth year of our current conflict in Iraq, and our sixth year in Afghanistan. As we ponder how best to honor those who have died in these conflicts and in all prior wars, we can look to our history to find words and actions to guide us. Just as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address turned sentiment into prose, Miss Michael turned it into poetry, and then into action. For ourselves, we can look at the sacrifices of those who have served and then look within ourselves to honor them with our lives.

For myself, I pledge my continued best effort to make certain that those who serve receive the thanks and the benefits and services they earned by their service and for those who gave their all, that their survivors are likewise given all they need.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR TED STEVENS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor one of the true stalwarts of this institution an indefatigable legislator, a tireless advocate for his home State of Alaska, a public servant with a lifetime of contribution, and a treasured leader of this venerable Chamber, Senator TED STEVENS who, this past April 13, 2007, became the longest-serving Republican member of the U.S. Senate. Our good friend and colleague has received countless, well-deserved accolades for a tremendous milestone indeed.

It is fitting that we pay tribute to an esteemed lawmaker whose ongoing legacy and longstanding record of accomplishment over a remarkable span of nearly 39 years of service in the U.S. Senate stand as a testament to the courage, vigor, and sense of duty he feels toward this country and the issues and policies shaping it. TED is a force of nature, steadfast and resolute, in this time-honored body and in our nation's capital. His constituents wouldn't have him any other way, and we wouldn't either.

His legacy of achievement on behalf of Alaskans is as large as the State they call home, and began even before he entered politics when he first moved to Washington, DC, to join the Eisenhower administration. While working for the Secretary of the Interior, he was not only present at Alaska's creation as a State in 1959, but was also instrumental in helping advocate for statehood. As a U.S. Senator, he was essential in championing the development of the Alaskan pipeline which was critical to his state and to the energy future of the country. He successfully advanced Alaska's infrastructure and transportation capabilities, espe-

cially vital to the state that is one-fifth the size of the entire lower 48. Alaska rightfully commemorated Senator STEVENS' indelible impact in these areas with the dedication of the TED STEVENS Anchorage International Airport in 2000. With a far-reaching litany of accomplishments too numerous to mention, it comes as little surprise that the Alaska State Legislature—where he served as House majority leader in only his second term in the mid-1960s would name him at the millennium, the Alaskan of the Century.

The people of my State of Maine are especially grateful to Senator STEVENS for his landmark legislation that bears his name—the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act our Nation's indispensable fisheries act, which was reauthorized this past January and signed into law. First as the chair, and now the ranking member on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation subcommittee handling fisheries issues, I had the pleasure of working with full committee chairman and now ranking member STEVENS throughout the process to help bring this bill to fruition. From the 300 year-old fishing villages in downeast Maine to remote Aleutian Island outposts, Senator STEVENS has always been bound by a commitment to sustain both fish and fishermen.

Through many Congresses, as both a chairman and ranking member, Senator STEVENS has spearheaded and done much to shepherd improvements in the largely uncharted world of telecommunications policy that have been historic and consequential, and which will reverberate for generations. On a personal note, I want to express my debt of enormous thanks to Senator STEVENS for his pivotal support in his Universal Service Fund Reform bill of the E-rate program which provides discounted telecommunications services to schools and libraries. Senator STEVENS has been a bulwark catalyst on this initiative, and, as we recently commemorated the 10th anniversary since its inception, I couldn't help but recall with gratitude his crucial role in the wiring schools in my State and across the country.

It must also be noted that in an era of increasing partisanship, Senator STEVENS shares an unassailable bond with the senior Senator from Hawaii, a Democrat, Daniel Inouye a friendship, profoundly steeped in their mutual, heroic tours of duty in World War II, which continues to this day as a model example of collegiality, bipartisanship, and comity that transcends politics.

This decorated Army Air Forces pilot in the storied “Flying Tigers,” whose immense devotion to this land and its people extends across six decades, is not one to move to the side or step away when he is fighting for what he believes in or on behalf of his State or in defense of his country. That speaks volumes in explaining Senator STEVENS' well-known trademark as he prepares to debate on the Senate floor and

he dons his infamous tie emblazoned with the Marvel comic book character, The Incredible Hulk!

With hallmark humor, strength, and aplomb, how could he approach his robust role any differently—a man whose larger-than-life tenure in the public arena reflects the enormity of his stunning and beloved Alaska, a State with a name that means literally “the object towards which the action of the sea is directed.” For more than half century, the action of the sea of public policy has always found its way to this great American and still does because he welcomes it, thrives on it, and seizes upon it in the name of The Last Frontier State and to the benefit of our Nation.

OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed that the Senate may not consider the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act,” the OPEN Government Act, S. 849, before it adjourns for the Memorial Day recess. The Judiciary Committee favorably reported this bipartisan bill. We have filed a committee report on this important legislation. Regrettably, an anonymous Republican hold is stalling this important Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, legislation, needlessly delaying long-overdue reforms to strengthen FOIA and to protect the public's right to know.

It is both unfortunate and ironic that this bipartisan bill, which promotes sunshine and openness in our government, is being hindered by a secret and anonymous hold. This is a good government bill that Democrats and Republicans alike, can and should work together to enact. I hope that the Senator placing the secret hold on this bill will come forward, so that we can resolve any legitimate concerns, and the full Senate can promptly act on this legislation.

The OPEN Government Act is co-sponsored by 10 Senators from both sides of the aisle. This bill is also endorsed by more than 100 business, public interest, and news organizations from across the political and ideological spectrum, including, the American Library Association, Conservation Congress, the Liberty Coalition, OpenTheGovernment.org, the Sunshine in Government Initiative, the Republican Liberty Caucus and Public Citizen.

I thank all of the cosponsors of this bill and commend Senator CORNYN as our lead Republican sponsor. I also thank the many open government organizations that are working tirelessly to encourage the Congress to enact this bill this year. This measure is cleared for passage on the Democratic side. It should be passed without further delay.

The OPEN Government Act promotes and enhances public disclosure of government information under FOIA, by helping Americans to obtain timely re-

sponses to their FOIA requests and improving transparency in the Federal Government's FOIA process. During the recent hearing that the Judiciary Committee held on this legislation, we learned that, although FOIA remains an indispensable tool in shedding light on bad policies and government abuses, this open government law is being hampered by excessive delays and lax FOIA compliance. Today, Americans who seek information under FOIA remain less likely to obtain it than during any other time in FOIA's 40-year history. This bill would help to reverse this trend and to restore the public's trust in their government.

Senator CORNYN and I both know that open government is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It is an American issue. It is in this spirit that I urge the removal of the anonymous hold placed on this bill. I also urge all Members of the Senate to join me in supporting this important open government legislation.

We have received numerous letters of support from such organizations as the American Library Association, the National Press Club, Pubic Citizen, Sunshine in Government Initiative and OpenTheGovernment.org. I ask unanimous consent that a letter in support sent to the majority and Republican leaders of the Senate and endorsed by more than 100 organizations from across the political spectrum be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

MAY 17, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID AND SENATOR MCCONNELL: We write on behalf of the undersigned group of 100 business, public interest, and historical groups and associations to endorse the OPEN Government Act of 2007 (S. 849), as introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy and Senator John Cornyn.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the public's most significant tool for ensuring integrity and accountability from the federal government. Unfortunately, FOIA's promise of ensuring an open and accountable government has been seriously undermined by the excessive processing delays that FOIA requesters face across the government. The OPEN Government Act would: Close loopholes in FOIA; Help the public get timely responses to FOIA requests; and Improve agency accountability and require better management of FOIA programs.

The public's confidence in the executive branch has reached a dramatic low point. The OPEN Government Act of 2007 would demonstrate bipartisan congressional leadership to restore public faith in government and to advance the ideals of openness that our democracy embodies. The Senate Judiciary Committee has reported favorably upon the bill without any amendments. We urge you to support this legislation and help it move quickly to the Senate floor for a vote.

Sincerely,
Alliance for Justice
America Association of Law Libraries
American Association of Small Property Owners

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

American Families United

American Library Association

Animal Welfare Institute

ASPCA

Assassination Archives and Research Center

Association of American Publishers

Bill of Rights Defense Committee

Biodiversity Conservation Alliance

Blancett Ranches, Aztec, NM

Californians Aware

Californians for Western Wilderness

Center for Democracy and Technology

Center for Energy Research

Center for National Security Studies

Citizen Action New Mexico

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Common Cause

Community Recovery Services

Conservation Congress

Doctors for Open Government

DownsizeDC.org, Inc.

The E-Accountability

Foundation/Parentadvocates.org

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Environmental Defense Institute

Environmental Integrity Project

Ethics in Government Group

Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety & Health, Inc.

Florida First Amendment Foundation

Forest Guardians

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Friends of Animals

Friends of the Wild Swan

Georgia ForestWatch

Georgians for Open Government

Government Accountability Project

Great Basin Mine Watch

Gun Owners of America

HALT, Inc

The Health Integrity Project

HEAL Utah

The Humane Society of the United States

Idaho Sporting Congress, Inc.

Indiana Coalition for Open Government

The James Madison Project

Law Librarian Association of Greater New York

Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin

League of Women Voters of the U.S.

Liberty Coalition

Los Alamos Study Group

Maine Association of Broadcasters

Mine Safety and Health News

The Multiracial Activist

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Freedom of Information Coalition

National Security Archive

National Taxpayers Union

National Treasury Employees Union

National Whistleblower Center

Natural Resources Defense Council

The New Grady Coalition

No FEAR Coalition

Northern California Association of Law Libraries

Northwest Environmental Advocates

Nuclear Watch New Mexico

Okanogan Highlands Bottling Company

OMB Watch

Open Society Policy Center

OpenTheGovernment.org

Oregon Natural Desert Association

Oregon Peace Works

Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.

People For the American Way

Project On Government Oversight

Public Citizen

ReadtheBill.org Education Fund

Republican Liberty Caucus

Reynolds, Motl & Sherwood, PLLP